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ABSTRACT

Both the forms and the content of current classroom practice fit into a generally repressive socialization pattern for students. The formal constituents of typical classroom practice in American higher education include grades, tests, grade distribution, syllabi and schedules, all of which contribute to a generally repressive socialization pattern which is nonetheless necessary to maintain the present society. Grades represent an extrinsic motivation to conform to the educational system, and result in the distortion or denial of students' intrinsic desire to learn and grow. The current American educational process is part of a socialization process which denies human needs because of the nature of the society to which students are being asked to conform. Any attempt to change the classroom must change both form and content, and must begin with the recognition that professional educators do not know all the answers. (Author/BP)

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The Repressive Content of the Formal Constituents of Classroom Practice

Bert Garskof

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INTRODUCTION

The body of this paper analyzes formal constituents of typical classroom practice in American higher education. The following practices are examined: grades, tests, grade distributions, syllabi, schedules. This presentation is guided by a theoretical perspective which sets both the forms and the content of classroom practice within the generally repressive socialization pattern for children: a pattern necessary to reproduce the present society.

The first section of the paper outlines some theoretical bases from which the critique of normative pedagogic forms will be launched. These ideas are presented briefly since the main intent of the paper is to concentrate on actual classroom practice. The paper's initial theoretical section includes the underside of socialization--those liberatory potentials present within and because of the repressive socialization qua education. This lays the foundation for suggestions made in the final section for alterations in the form/content dialectic which might move the classroom from a functional partial totality to a therapeutic/subversive arena.

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

I. The nature of each society determines the shape of its socialization pattern. However, this does not mean that the raw material for the socialization to come consists of neutral tabula rasa. Rather, the pattern which is imposed by any

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society always must come up against a set of ineradicable human needs. Each society's nature--mediated by the group of child rearers--the last generation created in conformity with society's nature--determines a socialization pattern which attempts to meet or attempts to deny those non-erasable needs. To the extent that any particular society allows for human needs to be directly satisfied then socialization will proceed in a relatively non-conflictive manner. Child rearing practices in gathering societies illustrate this possibility.[1]

When, however, human needs must be largely denied or severely distorted because of the nature of a society then the process of socialization will reflect this unfortunate fact. It will proceed as open conflict between generations. This is inevitably so because human needs cannot be <u>permanently</u> denied. Child rearers who must socialize in ways which attempt to control and distort human need will be in conflict with their charges. People who are socialized this way will carry the conflicts with them as parts of their adult character structure for their whole lives. Thus, socialization, of which education is a part, is a meeting ground where human needs and society's needs, when these stand in contradiction, meet in battle, but when there is no significant contradiction they meet in harmony.

II. What of our society? It's nature predicates contradiction and massive warfare. The simple to state but fundamental fact of private property determines the severe contradiction and

extent of the war. (This is not the place to take up the obvious and important fact that state bureaucratic societies must battle human nature as well as private capitalist dominated societies.) In our society the ownership and control of production vested by law and custom in a tiny self-perpetuating group of families and retainers gives this minority the seeming right and the clear capability to dominate the majority of people in the interest of the tiny minority itself. Institutions of socialization from the specific--public education--to the indirect--mass media--to the seemingly natural--parenting, are all guided by the interests of the minority to reproduce a majority which will, in general incorrectly identify its interests with the interests of the minority. We all grow up, at least it is hoped that we all grow up as functional cogs in "society." But society means, in our society, that certain set of institutions, roles, beliefs, attitudes, values; theory and practice in general, which serves the minority and insures the reproduction of the same state of affairs into the future. Thus our society has a normative socialization pattern, which of course varies appropriately with social positions, but which is accurately described as a type of socialization which stresses the denial of human needs.[2] It strains toward the replacement of direct nurturance of human needs and capacities with the imposition of a character structure in which is built the ongoing repression and distortion of those human aspects. The dialectical

combat never permits complete victory so that the resultant character contains and shows needs. The worker/consumer is alienated from something; yet not from something within the person's daily experience or from something given through socialization--but alienated from what is vaguely present and submerged--what was given at birth and taken away in socialization--the other side of the coin--that which is unnamed but somehow known--non-alienation. And in the war which goes on between the partial victory--the proper repressed character structure and the victory of human nature--the inevitable alienation always intertwined with the proper way of being--there comes about the multi-formed antithesis--the mostly self-destructive reactions--neuroses, mental illness, family disarray, riots, addictions, etc. Of course the forces for socialization and re-socialization attempt to turn these reactions back on the victims and only when the victims reject that idea do the antitheses move toward synthesis--the creative en masse rejection of the socialization and of the reason for it.

III. The primary social responsibility of education is the characterologic reproduction of society's population.[3] This undertaking includes one overt and two covert aspects. To the extent that curriculum has no meaning other than itself, it is non-ideological. Vocational training of specific skills, algebra for example, may have <u>in themselves</u> little or no other meaning. Of course, that certain skills are taught to certain

segments of the to-be socialized working class carries a meaning over and above the nature of the skill itself. The fact that vocational skills are divided from the skills necessary to do the higher order planning, or development for these same vocations is a schism characteristic of a class society. The fact that this division is taught as if it was natural and indisputable when it is one of the most important issues in workers' struggles all over the world[4] points to the level of covert meaning carried by much of the content and the omissions of content embodied by what is portrayed as curriculum pure and simple. The interpenetration of ideology with most aspects of curriculum--in the social sciences, humanities and sciences is necessary for education to proceed with its repressive function. It is merely the actualization of its social function in a class society. Proper ideas, attitudes and values are thereby taught. In addition the means by which the curriculum is conveyed--the forms of education carry covertly the same ideological meanings and perform the same ideological function --as will be seen later in this paper.

IV. In our class based stratified society education serves as a channeling medium. The further one goes the more people have dropped by the wayside. The end result is a recapitulization of the prior stratified structure. People with darker skin and women remain in the lower reaches of the distributional pyramid and white men stay on higher parts while the small ruling class still builds, owns, and controls the pyramids.

In addition, a few places always are kept open for the lucky or talented in the disadvantaged groups so that they may work their way through the system and stand as individuals in the stratosphere with the better off people. Just enough places are kept open for everyone to notice and believe that they might be one of the mobile ones and that the system is not closed. Because education (or talent or athletic ability) can help some individuals rise above the station of their families or at least give training and diplomas necessary to avoid the lowest stations, education functions as the tracking or channeling system. Within higher education itself, a stratification exists which helps perpetuate the existing social stratification through differential legitimization and training.[5] First, the college/no college dichotomy separates lower level workers or chronically unemployed. Then the community college, or junior college separates the technical or administrative workers, large low-status state universities create the large middle stratum of workers, small businessmen and housewives/consumers, while the elite universities, colleges, and graduate schools produce the managers, professionals, and cultural elite. Analysis of teaching methodology to be made later will have to refer to these different levels since each level develops somewhat specific educational practices to insure proper socialization for each societal task.

However, with the need to become specific noted and delayed it is still true that the primary general task of

higher education is the reproduction of society. Of course we are taught to think that education and vocational training are different. But there is no part of educational which is not vocational and there is no part which is educational in the sense that we would like to think of education--some pure and disinterested transmission of the world's knowledge to those willing and/or able to absorb the knowledge. Education is socialization--knowledge is all vocational. People's vocation includes work, consumption and a specific world view and a daily practice based on that world view. It is precisely that view and practice necessary for the continued smooth operation of a society which is by any objective standard unfair to the many in favor of the privileges of a few. Worse, it is a society in which the privileges of the few include the degrading and perhaps destroying the whole world and all of the people in it.

V. Higher education in our society must repress critique so as to foster unthinking acceptance of the social order and to replace critique with culture, i.e., right ideas and behaviors for individuals destined to function in alienating jobs, in alienating consumption and alienating social life.

Higher education's effectiveness rests on several factors:

1. Its methodology

a. The content--that which is taught intentionally--this is a package of ideologically correct and safe ideas mixed

with general and specific vocational and consumeral training. There are several excellent analyses of the ideological content of various academic disciplines.

b. The form--that which is taught unintentionally but serves the same ideological ends as the content does. College teaching follows traditional forms which are seen by the participants as necessary or natural vehicles to carry the content to students. The body of the paper will attempt to analyses these as meaningful contents which play an important socializing function.

2. The raw materials--the students. They are the products of early childhood socialization, and public education and so come into college classrooms prone to having the proper attitudes toward the forms to be experienced as well as already having been inculcated into the patterns of and content of thought representative of right thinking in our society. They arrive ready for more of the same and in general have their expectations met.

3. The characteristics of the workers--the faculty. They are in general members of what has been called a labor aristocracy --privileged, upwardly mobile, and totally dependent on the goodwill of the agencies which represent the ruling class--government, state bureaucracies, etc. Generally situated then as dependent and eager surrogates for the status quo, they are, themselves, the unwitting products of the same ideologically

determined education they perpetuate.

VI. There are factors which create a resistance to the educative-socialization process and make possible the formation of opposition out of the passive resistance present in the situation. The raw materials-human beings are never wholly socialized. We are not capable of total denial of our species' needs. Repression, however severe, is not the same phenomenon as conditioning in animals or the programming of computers. There is a human condition which disallows this. Under all possible conditioning always within the alienated spirit there resides thrusts toward understanding and community which actively seek release. The release may be dominated by the mantle of alienation but its existence is still an affirmation and therefore there is the potential for liberation. An example might be the formation of gangs. No matter how socialization attempts to destroy the notion of community in favor of an atomized mass, young people seek out community--a largely self-destructive youth culture, but an affirmation in a disguised fashion of that which is alienated.

This subterranean layer is present as well in the workers--the teachers who as people suffer the same repression and who as teachers face the thwarting of their best motivations by the limiting forms and contents which they must use as templates to shape their raw material. It is a little like auto workers who know better than anyone the potential for the production of safe, beautiful and enduring autos and who

must everyday work to produce the junk sold as cars.

There is also a slim critical thread woven through the modern institution of higher learning. The course of the development of these colleges and universities is such that the assimilating-socializing mass function arising with the development of managed capitalism was merged in a marriage of convenience with the older social role of academia--the transmission of high culture to the elite. So, in even the community, technical, and junior colleges a weak and clearly anachronistic current of critique remains on campus. It is maintained by older, less successful, or just old-fashioned faculty members who still see what they are supposed to do as the training in the "eternal verities." Bemused by the lack of "ability" in modern students, students' lack of interest in the golden ages, these teachers are generally untutored in anything but idealistic critique. Therefore, they are left with a kind of wistful scholarship, with its concommitant cynicism about the present generations of students, and a fin-de siecleism about the present with no notions about any possibility for new beginnings. Yet for all their brackish stagnation they provide a knowledge of the possibility at least of critique while at college without which the idolatry of the present would otherwise go unchallenged.

It is also the case that the claims that we are an open society rests in great measure upon the appearance of critique in higher education. This appearance is kept up with the toleration of the "anciens" and with a scattering of other, in

the specific sense, non-operative units--the academic rebels, life-style radicals, touchy-feelie educators, and a few Marxist scholars as long as their Marxism does not alter their academic practice.

Again it must be said that although from the point of view of system maintenance the combination of dissidents listed plays a functional role (its existence teaches an important bit of ideology about our kind of society), and the package of critique does not effectively challenge the dominant functional educational goals--yet the continued presence of any form of different thinking and alternate behaviors keeps the potential alive for a dysfunctional critique. Whatever the limits placed on critique by its teachers, students hear something different and may themselves deepen the critique by virtue of their own experiences. This is especially true in times of heightened political struggle such as the late 60s and early 70s, when students and others quickly transcended the limits of critique placed by the entrenched liberal faculty members who attempted to constrict activism in ways which would keep it within traditional forms and tried to define the dissent within intellectual orthodoxy. Yet, if it wasn't for these limiting critiques the base for what followed might not have been present.

Summary So Far

We have an arrangement of theoretical ideas presented which begins with a general function for education: the

repression of critique and a methodology which emerges to perform this function. Then, on the other hand, we have contradictions inherent in the total arrangement which make the general function problematic. These contradictions include the nature of the raw materials--the students--the nature of the faculty members as workers, and the weak but real critique present within the otherwise totalitarian system.

We now have to develop some notions as to the nature of the formal methodology which is designed to teach the repressive critique--content, but which, in the present analysis, will be viewed as a repressive content in itself.

The repression of critique includes its replacement with ideology. What people think, feel, perceive, believe, want and do are mediated by a world-view or ideology which exists because of the need of the dominating class to dominate but to do so without seeming to do so. This ideology must contain elements which correspond to material reality or people would be unable to function. But even though reality must intrude, it only intrudes safely as it is always only available with its ideological companion which defines reality even while it allows reality its place.

Form and content are also joined in theory and practice. Forms have developed which have become acceptable to those who are involved--teachers and students--and these forms are precisely those necessary to carry the content of repression. To teach ideology in a manner which encourages discovery would

be absurd. Such an approach has the obvious danger of opening up the possibility that students might find out more than intended or than would be "good" for them. It also opens up the contradiction between learning in the passive mode (the normal) and discovery learning--a form for becoming--a kind of existence incompatible with a culture of domination. Passive learning teaches proper political and social attitudes. It teaches the expectation of domination. Discovery learning teaches, over and above what content is learned, a mode of being which is antithetical to the character structure comfortable with domination. So here is the unity of form and content--the forms carry a content identical to that carried by the ideological content carried by the forms.

In the next pages some of these forms will be examined. In general, what we are exploring is the difference between sets of oppositions--passive and active learning--existing and becoming--exchange and use value--quantitative and qualitative experience--rationalization and reason--these are all different expressions for the same thing and all reflect and in turn contribute in their own ways to the contradiction embodied in the social structure between classes and between the pressure for extending domination for the sake of the status quo and counter pressure for liberation.

Whatever counter-critical form we examine, it is a reified form. That is, it seems normal and natural to teachers and students. It may be justified, when challenged, by

reference to human nature. "People won't work unless they are threatened with punishment." Or simply that the unsophisticated minds of students need the guidance of a standardized syllabus. Or claims for scientific validity or objectivity may be raised to justify the administration of a multiple choice test. All of these appeals to custom, nature, science fall under the notion of reification. All are themselves, when discussed, part of the ideological content and when used as reification become part of the unnoticed formal structure.

One general motif in the spread of repressive culture involves the rationalization of experience.[6] Travel abroad becomes the packaged tour. Everything from airport welcome to number of drinks is pre-calculated, planned, and paid for. The possibility that travel could be qualitatively enriching, providing a medium for experiencing the unexpected, is thus reduced to a known quantity. Confronted with the question, tourists will extol the virtues of clean beds, known prices, pre-planning--that is, they will support the rationalization of experience over the qualities of having experiences themselves.

As higher education came to have broad social functions for the socialization of the majority it came to be dominated by rationalization. That is to say, the growth of higher education as a democratic institution involved the ascendence of the quantitative over the qualitative. Education became a package

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to be rationalized, made up of known quantities and unsurprising expectations. The qualitative experience of learning became the managed and administered quantity of a liberal arts curriculum.

Teachers, although their own education may include archaic qualitative components, are after all socialized members of our society and are adapted to rationalized and quantified experience in their own unbringing and in their ongoing daily lives. This is to say that teachers quite "naturally" accept the domination of the managed in their work. Managed and rationalized experience has become like second nature--not to be questioned. The teacher is motivated to accept the substitution of managed quantities for the qualitative experience of learning. This is because the teacher, above all, is by training and perhaps even inclination able to know. The teacher to the extent he/she wants to teach faces daily the roadblock that managed education presents. The teacher, that is to say, must not face the unfaceable and so must fail to notice the massive obstruction to teaching presented by the forms of teaching. The student, on the other hand, is wistful for something unknown and unexperienced that is missing from it all. But on the other hand, she/he is satisfied that the college is performing its socially accepted purpose and so too denies the sense of lacking something.

The transmutation of learning from a qualitative to a quantitative experience is mirrored in and determined by the

division in the overall society. Our form of society turns quality--use value or usefulness--into exchange value--most often a quantity of money. Historically, one can trace the beginnings of the substitution of exchange for use and the growing domination of exchange value until today only children, Hobbists and the institutionalized produce for use--all others make what they make for the possibility of exchanging their work for some wage or payment which in turn will pay for something made by someone else under the same terms. This preponderant weight accorded to exchange value in our society does not remain within the realm of material production. It becomes the factor which molds all relationships--I'll give you this for this much this--be it love or favors or presents--all are turned into reciprocating quantities. So it is not surprising that the classroom is as dominated by exchange value as the rest of our lives. The domination of the use-in-itself of learning by the exchangeable value of learning defines the reified--managed seemingly like second nature--classroom. The core around which this all revolves is the grade.

First, we must see the dual functions involved in the assignment of a grade to a student. We know from common sense as well as from many laboratory learning studies that feedback or knowledge of results in most circumstances is a beneficial component of learning and retention. As a part of learning in the classroom, feedback in the form of critical comments can

only be helpful to the serious student. No logic implicit in the sense behind the idea of feedback compels us to assign a grade to our useful comments. In fact, our teacherly work ends with our critical comments. Our role as personpower channeler begins when we accompany our comments with a grade. A grade is a chip for later redemption--a bit of exchange value. Labor power is paid wages in our society. Over the whole working class wages are paid in an amount just enough to reproduce the labor power on a daily and generational basis. But even though this is true overall, some workers are paid somewhat more than others and some are out of work all together. Workers who are worth more on the labor market are those with college degrees and those with higher grades have an easier time than those with lower grades. So, grades are promises for advantages in the future; advantages as against others who have less or who are disadvantaged. In their own time of assignment, grades are well known for setting student against student and they retain this power for the whole productive life of the people involved. When "awarded" grades divide students as they are given out on a curve--some A's, more B's, lots of C's, some D's and a few F's--the well known and by now reified normal curve.

The name couldn't express the concept of reification more clearly. It has come to be so normal that students and professors alike lose sight of the arbitrary mathematics which generate the bell shapes, which just happen to match the

distributions of incomes and other privileges which describe our society . . . a few rich, more upper-middle class, a large middle income group, a smaller lower-middle class and a few in poverty. Of course this description is ideological. There are many more in poverty than the normal curve predicts or politicians would wish. Nonetheless, on the level of ideology the normal curve is the rule.

The classroom normal curve is generated by a teaching and testing methodology which could be modified to produce many other curves. But the normal remains the goal. This curve is so ubiquitous as to have become normal--expectable and acceptable. And this is the curve which makes students into competitors. Only a few will be rewarded maximally. Mediocre advantages are the fate in store for most. Each vies against the curve but really against each other. Receded into the darkness of ancient history is the idea of mastery for everyone. An idea which if it became the guiding principle instead of the curve of exchange values the qualitative could replace the marketplace quantities which now rule.

Mastery as a criterion is antithetical to our marketplace function. If we worked as teachers every student, whatever prior advantages or disabilities are represented initially in the classroom, attained roughly equivalent levels of mastery then no differential distribution, certainly no "normal" distribution of grades could be assigned. In a classroom predicated on the eventual assignment of differential

grades, teachers willy-nilly fulfill their role in the marketplace and do so as the unwitting allies of a self-fulfilling prophesy. Co-peers are graded after 15 weeks so as to replicate the initial scatter of advantages and disadvantages. It is a sign of a good tester that grades correlate across exams. This correlation arises not from test validity and reliability but from the hidden commitment to the market's need for a distribution. A teaching ethic which stressed mastery for all would not lead to such correlations or rather such correlations would be taken as data for further work instead of data for the self-satisfaction now gleaned from the same event.

This teacherly self-deception is at its height in a classroom shaped by the multiple choice tests. Here evaluation approaches zero as the numerical score stands unadorned as a ranking in a differential distribution of scores. All a student may learn from this is his/her exchange value relative to others.

Students, in this setting, are probably less mystified by the goings on than instructors. Students know the overarching importance of grades. Certainly they are not fooled into believing that evaluation is the goal--or why the multiple choice test? Instructors need, on the other hand, to believe that they are educators, not personnel channellers. So we tend to believe in tests. We are fooled by our own social practice into believing that a multiple choice test is part of education. Some thought would reveal its nature to those not

threatened by the revelation. What if a multiple choice test leads to no distribution, to a rectangular distribution, in the argot of our trade? We would declare a mistake--take the blame and schedule a new test. Why? No distribution! How can we give grades without a distribution? And so on, trapped by our need to obscure our social function, aided by our expertise we unquestioningly create a situation which almost always creates a distribution. We never wonder why our distribution so usefully matches distributions of income and other privileges awaiting the data of our distributions. After all, we are merely measuring educational performance and hence merit.

How, in fact, do we insure both evaluative triviality and a distribution for grading? First, we must assign a quantity of material impossible for any but the most unusual to commit to memory by test time. Then we must draw from the set of all possible assigned material a subset--the test; this subset drawn, if we are to be fair, at random from all possible items, or at random within subassigned material such as chapters. Meanwhile, as the test is constructed, students as they live--out of communication with one another, each with differing skills, time, motivation, anxiety, money for tape recorders, etc., attempt to do the impossible--commit to memory the facts to be tested. (It is worth noting the quantification or atomization of knowledge fostered by this kind of study.) On test day, each constituent of the aggregate to be tested brings a subset of the to-be-remembered items to the

classroom. The test event is the conjoining of each constituent subset with the test subset. All other things being equal, this event will lead to the requisite distribution. The event is a success for the instructor. For the student qua student, he/she has participated in a lottery--nothing more. Even factors which may differentially influence the individual's chances of scoring a large number of hits--such as motivational factors are in and of themselves extrinsic factors. As we function as adjuncts to the market we tend to equate these factors with merit. If mastery and evaluation were the rules we would see these non-random factors as exactly the ones we would work to hold constant. Of course we would do this while removing the lottery in toto.

The multiple choice test in which evaluation approaches zero, learning is most atomized, score least representative of mastery, and most likely to set student against student, is an instrument which reflects the degrading of teaching as no other classroom form. However, any test may be a participant in the same set of issues. An essay test is often favored by instructors who reject the superficiality of the multiple choice test. But these still are graded. Even though the comments or feedback may be considerable, the grade which accompanies always dominates. Because of the grade's relation to exchange value, students need the comments to be reflective of exchange principles. Thus, comment must really differentiate on quantitative terms. "Why did you say these similar words

about my paper as you said about my roommate's paper but give her a higher grade?" No truthful answer is possible because the instructor is trapped in the contradiction between teaching and channeling. No critical comment can be quantitatively comparable with any other bit of wisdom passed on about an essay or term paper. No set of essay's answers adds up to a B- or another set to a B. We pretend to add them however and cannot admit, without tearing the veil from our own powerlessness, that we are attempting the impossible. Our defenses are several. If I change yours it will never end . . . once I grade I never change my mind . . . it's a B- paper if I ever saw one.

We never tell the student the potential effect on anyone's place in the distribution by changes in arbitrary decisions we have made. For example, what if in an essay test, different relative weights than the announced ones were assigned to each essay? Or what about our secrets--that some of us grade easier as it gets later . . that we grade poor handwriting more harshly especially when it is getting late . . . that we recognize the work of some favorite students even when we attempt to grade the test blindly.

What is the meaning of the test/grade to the student? They are of course old hat by the time students enter college. They mean what they have already meant; that learning, as relationships, as almost all of their experience, is quantified experience--measured, weighed, rewarded, punished; that that

which gave intrinsic pleasure, call it the pleasure of mastery, of discovery, of increasing competence, is to be replaced by the pleasure of doing well in the battle for external rewards . . . that the pleasure of working together; call it cooperation is to be replaced by competition and the certain knowledge that only those who please the powers that be will succeed in the competition to make a living. Professors teach and reteach these messages everytime a course runs by the lore of the marketplace. Freshpeople enter their first class prepared for what is to come by their experiences in education but they are also ready for something different if it should appear. After all, this is college. But for most it turns out to be the same. A professor controls them through grades. Do they <u>want</u> to learn, study, master? They and we will never know.

Any required work may unavoidably carry a formal meaning linking the assignment to the general repression of critique. Motivation is usually divided into intrinsic and extrinsic varieties. Intrinsic motivation refers to all of those satisfactions, organisms and especially people glean from the successful completions of tasks, from novelty, from mastering something, from following curiosity to where it leads, and so forth. Extrinsic motivation usually means those rewards and punishments meted out by the powers that are able to do so. Grades and inevitably the critical comments we may attempt to attach to the grades fall under the rubric of extrinsic motivators. They are what gets the student to work--supposedly.

Without the carrot and the stick--high and low grades and required work--the student would do nothing. That is to say, there is supposedly no intrinsic motivation at work, that a student doesn't want to learn and must be forced to do so. There is of course a certain truth to this. Students who have been already shaped by the socialization process for 18 years have lost a great deal of touch with the intrinsic satisfactions to be found in learning. However, whatever little or still reachable intrinsic motivation exists is only further submerged by our introduction of the extrinsic . . . until recently educational dogma asserted that the two forms of motivation summated to produce more desire to learn than either would produce alone. Recent research[7] indicates what students were always capable of articulating--that the threat of low grades and the need to do assigned rather than self-paced and self-determined learning subtracted from their desire to learn for the sake of learning.

The meaning of the assignment, with its to be graded concommitant is quite clear. Never forget, it says, that exchange dominates use in our society. And the message suppresses use--it suppresses the quality of learning most useful--itself--and replaces it with the fears of failure and the rewards of successful competitions and the quantity value of the grade. Each aspect of the assignment with its grade thus moves students further away from their own best motives. Of course the teacher sees none of this. After all, learning goes

on. Isn't that self-evident after all distribution is generated--some don't do the work--it is their failure . . some do it poorly but some always do well. The normal distribution validates the self-fulfilling prophesy. Ask no questions about why only some did well. Why that is, in terms of teaching and its goals. Any distribution reflects ability or good behavior which some have and some don't.

What is doing well? It is doing the assignment--performing, feeding back what is required. The student who pursues interest where ever it leads is not performing and will fall by the wayside. So rewards go to those who do what is assigned--give back what is expected. It does not faze the instructor that the cramming which precedes the test may be followed by quick forgetting after the test. Nor is it important to wonder whether the students are able to put the studied material to some use. No questions about the nature of these tests are allowed since the goal of a distribution is attained. After this success a new group of students appear eager to follow the same set of procedures to the same conclusion.

What about the most expectable and in some institutions contractually required instrument of teaching--the syllabus? A syllabus, the formalization of another, past experience cannot be laid like a template on a new set of experiences without the old interfering with the unfolding of the new. This is not to say that each actor enters a blank page. Obviously not. Each person carries her/his whole history into

the new to-be-experienced. The mix of histories determines the course of events, at least initially. The yeasty quality of the total mix may begin to develop: a course of events not entirely predicated on the summation of histories. What is a syllabus? Is it the history of the teacher who is only one very important member of this mutuality of hopeful learners? In part its production grows out of the history of the teacher but it is not the history. A full autobiography, candid and insightful would still not circumscribe the active life of the individual. Such an autobiography is a copy of the life and as such loses much. The syllabus cannot even compete with the autobiography as it is merely a slice out of an active ongoing life. Moreover, it is a slice not of the life of the participant but instead is a freezing of a portion of the active knowledging based on an assumption which can only hinder. It assumes that the knowledge is somewhere else rather than inside of and a part of an ongoing becoming--the teacher. It assumes that this knowledge exists in the world outside of anyone and that the teacher is a retriever of it. The teacher has done supposedly what in turn the students are asked to do, feed-in to their memory banks a set of discrete facts and figures. The teacher, has already done so. The syllabus is a readout schedule. It's as if one computer is telling other computers when to expect a new set of data. On cue, computer one will spew forth and the little computers waiting will diligently encode. Of course, test/retrieval time will reveal

flaws in the circuitry and many will not be able adequately to feed back.

None of this is to say that facts would not pass between teachers and learners in a free-mutual learning/teaching situation. It is to say that the form of the learning in the college classroom creates a set of experiences which lead to the domination of the fact to the detriment of any possible becoming. And this is to be expected in a unit of the social totality whose function is to dominate minds and to shape the nature of the mind. This is part of the whole--to perpetuate the management of a society inhibited by that very management from becoming what it can be.

Catalog course descriptions and the assumptions behind the very idea of a course description, and the whole labeling of courses with numbers, levels, multiple sections of the same course are all forms which contribute to the rationalization and quantification of knowledge. And to the structuralization of character which conforms eventually to the continued experiencing of the world in quantified and rationalized modes.

Teachers are not to exist in the sense that they have individuated trajectories (the becomings which in teachers must be ongoing and must not be entirely predictable). This individuation is the stuff of teaching. It stands in contradiction to rationalization which seeks to quantify and thus equate everything and everyone. English 100 is given in 12 sections and the goal of the manager is to make each section

fungible. In the rationalized theorizing of management a student could on a given week attend any section and "get the same things." Thus, the victory of managed capital. It's not only that nothing worth retaining can be learned this way. It's not only that, in fact, students retain little learned this way. It's that it succeeds in structuring so much experience that the form becomes the content. People become beings who are rationalized--not by the route of the facts learned and soon forgotten but by virtue of becoming themselves structured characterologically to be-in-the-world in this rationalized mode. And in turn as they create the world they create a rationalized and frozen social existence. So, one part of the need to rationalize is to create a sameness out of fundamental difference. It is the assembly line nightmare brought into the classroom. Students are raw material and professors are in a classic ever-sharpening division of tasks. Each in turn tightens a few screws on schedule and the commodity--the educated worker/consumer moves on down the assembly line to the 200 level station and so forth until graduation day the adults roll off the assembly line--their shiny faces proclaiming their new inflated price tags.

The catalog course description presents an instance of the contradiction between learning as a form of becoming for the people involved and learning as a packaged tour. Those responsible for managing the learning experience demand a paragraph statement of the nature of a course. Those who

advise students convince the students-to-be that the paragraph is a summary of what is to come. Those responsible make it a difficult and time-consuming process to change this paragraph. In fact, the most accurate of these paragraphs expresses not what some student will get in the future but what in brief some students got once in the past. Yet many pressures are for performance based on the paragraph. Thus, the teacher must if he/she is to satisfy expectations bring his/her present qualities, the present direction, trajectory of thinking back in line with some past target.

Of course, it is also true that the very notion of separable fields of knowledge is questionable on the same grounds. Critical knowledge is like a sweater knitted into a mosaic pattern. The meaning of the sweater is portrayed in the pattern. Unravel the sweater and you have only smaller piles of yarn. So it is with learning. Departments, sub-specialties, courses, advanced courses, do not add up to anything meaningful but only to discrete piles of information which by virtue of their lack of meaning in the specific form that they come in are useless as building blocks for understanding. Each, by being a part ripped from the whole has its partial truth negated. Sure there might be something noticeably unique in psychology or economics, but each would have to be included in a total epistimologic field before becoming unique. Then the partial quality and uniqueness of psychology would include in its every aspect the totality

as well as the unique aspects which set it apart. The modern college education approaches matters from the opposite and the incorrect direction. It says to the student that the whole of psychology is to be found with psychology itself and says the same for each department. The student is advised that by getting each of these whole truths, the whole truth will be gradually learned by addition of one kind of truth to each other kind. So for example a student could learn in 4 years the geography of the Near East, the economics of oil, the consumer psychology of gasoline buying, the business practices of the oil companies, the history of the Arabs, the geology of oil formations, and so forth, but never through this methodology be enabled to put together anything but the ideological, simplistic and erroneous explanations for the energy crisis we have experienced. The division of knowledge hides the unity of critical truth. As a form, its meaning instructs students into the superficial and inadequate understandings of the developmental forces in the modern world necessary to participate as apathetic and appropriately uninformed citizens. The teachers, of course, are especially prepared for this sundering of unitary critical knowledge by the form and content of their own graduate training.

In the analysis presented we have tried to include typical and important aspects of teaching technique. None, according to our analysis escapes the critique being presented. All forms as well as all content participate in the social task

of education, the teaching of the ideology and the dismissal of critique. It is equally correct to say that critique must encompass both contentual and formal elements. To teach critical content using the forms of anti-critique negate the possibility of success. The forms carry a continuity of meaning for students who come to the critical classroom already socialized so that their character structures can easily tolerate, absorb and co-opt dissident content. Similarly there is no hope in the notion that forms can be freed without critical content being embedded in the process by the only initial carrier of the critical content--the critical teacher who initiates the formal change. Critical knowledge does not reside within the alienation waiting for the change to emerge. It must be discovered by people who act on their alienation, who change the forms of their struggle and who must in so doing come to study concrete past attempts at change, contemporary struggles, critical theory as well as their own histories. The leadership of the teacher is necessary for this content as well as being necessary for the initiation of formal changes which facilitate motion.

Without formal changes in the learning, that which might become critique becomes sterile. The critical ideas still are carried by forms suited for domination. They lose their sting, their ability to help people change and liberate their lives. The result is visible in sectarian rote learning of

Marx and other theorists. The practice which comes from such studying apes the practice of domination. And again the attempt to give students forms which permit self-growth without accompanying critical content turn students to mystical and to other avoidant of critique mythologies, resulting in students who are less, not more able to move toget to change what must be changed.

So, any attempt to change the classroom must change both form and content. But how change? It is important to know what the underside of alienation is present in each classroom because the overt observations we are able to make tend to lead to disbelief in the possibility of there being a critical but sleeping giant. Alienation, or apathy in the more commonly used terminology, is the result of successful socialization. This is obvious. But it is also true that there is never the possibility of repressive socialization being completely victorious. Human nature needs for us to use our minds actively. When we are socialized to not do so, when we are socialized to not expect the opportunity to exercise our minds, at school, on the job, or at home, it is true that we accept this state of affairs but we also rebel. We suffer every day we live without having the chance to do what comes most naturally to people--the use of our minds to discover the solution to problems. This suffering may have no name, no focus, no outlet, or it may take disguised forms--we may work on puzzles, hobbies, play games, daydream and so forth. We

must also assume the corresponding needs to teach and learn in people who are in front of classes. With all of the ready acceptance of the forms and contents of the culture of domination each teacher knows that these same pedagogic necessities to which there is such great commitment, these same things are those things which stand in the way of real teaching and cause the teachers alienation. Thus both sides in the seeming combat to get students to do what teachers say are united on deeper levels. Each needs the other to fulfill the need to do what is required--to create the ideology. Without compliant, passive students, teachers could not perform their social function. Without conformist teachers doing what is expected, students could not have exchange value added to their labor power. Yet, without each other neither group is able to negate the alienation present in the suppression of learning and teaching.

It is possible to distinguish between instructors and teachers in this dualistic world. The instructor carries the culture of oppression, the ideology or some portion of it, to the next generation. The teacher, on the other hand, performs a self-conscious prescriptive function. In a world where domination of the many in the self-interest of the few is a rule, the teacher is a critic-opponent. To instruct, that is to describe the social surfaces is to acculturate and thus to support. The only other alternative, to teach--overtly prescriptive and value laden, as distinct from instruction

which is value laden by implication, involves one in the explication of the social reality which underlies ideology. The job of this teacher is to help the student gain understanding of the material forces acting upon him/her. The teacher must delve beneath the surface of mental life both conscious and unconscious--must find the wellsprings of the dichotomy between social and phenomenal reality, between the descriptive reality of the social sciences and the reality of the forces of material production.

In community colleges and in vocational programs sequestered within liberal arts institutions the teaching closely matches hierarchical forms found in to-be experienced vocations. Forms are highly rigid and material is far removed from critique as well as "science." This is not to say that scientism and a smattering of culture does not get transmitted. Some such is necessary to obscure the benefit to industry which inheres to self payment for essentially on-the-job training. At the large but functionally diffuse state universities technical-vocational preparation is less specific but present. In addition, larger doses of mass culture is included in education because the somewhat higher earning potential of this constituency places them more importantly in the marketplace as consumers as well as workers. Here the teaching style is mass media oriented. Spectacle, alienation of size and teaching technology prepare for the suburban consumption of spectacle and commodity. At elite institutions

Summerhill is ascendent. This suits the stratum which must later control the mechanisms of domination, or be fated as surplus man power to be content to experience higher planes of existence learned in the non-structured by delimited counter-cultural options of open classrooms with teacher as guru.

If we are to teach we must not adopt uncritically any combination of the above postures-authority-entertainer-guru. Instead, we must be guided by our preliminary knowledge of our eventual goal. We want ourselves and our students to be self- and class-conscious subject-objects of history. Our classroom role flows from this and must serve to dissolve those constituents of false consciousness which stand in the way of our goal.

What posture, then? Some things are clear by default. We must not be authority figures but must be leaders in the learning, learning with and leading through. We must be whole people not mystified social roles. We must transact not transmit. We must learn for use and by discovery, never being abstract unless abstraction is rooted in material experience. We must allow for self-paced discovery while promoting group support and collective endeavor. Is any of this the answer? Probably not--for us as well as the students practice must lead.

As a bare beginning we should come to know what we don't know. We should be able to see with some study of the history of social science that the carving up of the unified study of

"political economy" into the distinct disciplines now found in the realm of social studies serves as an a priori obfuscation of the underlying realities of social life. When students "get" economics from someone with no sociology and again later hear psychology from an instructor who isn't even a student of human existence, the result must be a hodge-podge. This melange á social science if it is not remembered as chaotic bits of information and has any organized quality is organized by the only possible set of principles available to both student and instructor: the ruling ideology. Perhaps then, for us the beginning is to start to outline a unified and revelatory social science. No little endeavor--and one ironically or dialectally enough we are uniquely unprepared for. Certainly we are not prepared by our acculturization as upwardly mobile intellectual workers. Nor are we prepared by our training which functions as the paramount obstacle preventing us from knowing that we so desperately don't know.

So, without answers and some questions, we should go to the students in the naked but unashamed posture. This is the best insurance against the arrogance of our place within. To dominate, to free is contradictory and impossible. Birth and re-birth are not antithetical, however. We must be willing to claim the free space proclaimed so self-righteously to be a part of "the university." We must push at the limits set covertly on critique by those who tell us it is never to be limited. If we manage to get the iron fist under the velvet

glove to appear we may win even as we lose.

What does this all imply in very practical terms--it means for example, that the teacher must wait until the class forms to initiate a group process which gradually defines the forms and content of the endeavor. As part of this process, the teacher must expose the reasons for her/his own practice--must in fact expatiate on the content of this paper and win students over to the analysis. The instructor must be ready to work with the students to aid their learning of forms and content for their own beginning liberation or birth as individuated acting people. The instructor must make the exchange function of grades clear and must let students take what is theirs as a birthright, a guaranteed decent income and the grades necessary to help insure this. Both students and teacher must be concerned for the teacher's job. But this concern must be part of an understanding of the importance of the job in use value terms as well as the reality of exchange. And on the other hand the teacher must enter into the process knowing that hemlock always is the drink of teachers.

After all, the critical standards of the past call to us. After all, Socrates was our model scholar and educator. And the future calls--that sense of the better which is always beyond the bend of our own alienated road as disappointed teachers.

And there's the rub. Our own contradiction is expressed within the larger contradiction. True, on one side is our

material well-being and our social success. But the attainments which tantalize stop us in the classroom from doing precisely and exactly what we really wish to do--teach. If we didn't want to, why would we get so depressed? But, we lose sight of our own complicity in our own alienation. We are afraid to overthrow the very formalism which alienates our own experience. But, it can't be denied, we are alienated. We have not, for the sake of material incentives, become the perfect instructors. We are not just metabolically energized computers. Even though we, like everyone else, have been structuralized by our own managed upbringing, we survive as wishing teachers underneath. In fact, it is the alienation of the classroom that we experience which feeds our core of humanness. Others pass through, we are left back and never graduate. Each year we do the same things which make us feel cheated even as we advance academically or economically. Then, we all are in our felt alienation potential class traitors, with a profound self-interest in overcoming the managers. I don't think we should standardize ourselves further. I think we should resist. In fact, I think we should take some territory back which has been theirs for a while. To end with a paraphrase--teachers of the world unite--you have nothing to lose but your chains . . .

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